

The ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS PAGE

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Music: "Peg of My Heart" furnished by [Heart and Soul Music](#) "Providing Quality Music for Nursing Homes"

Spirituality and Aging

As we age, for many, religion and spirituality become much more important. For many, the religious service becomes one of the most important weekly events.

"Spiritual well being is not something achieved once and for all at a younger age. Instead we constantly must work to maintain spiritual health."

"Just when you think you know what you believe, you find there is so much more. Edward Powers."

There are other religious / spiritual activities that should be added to the calendars and services offered by the facility.

1. JCAHO requires a spiritual assessment but even if your not joint commission, every facility should be conducting spiritual assessments.
2. If the religion is not documented on the chart, the staff should go back and interview staff. If you conducted an audit, statistics show that about 25% of your charts have no documented religion. There should be a strong attempt by administration to find out all religions for every resident.
3. The calendar should offer Group Study and Educational Opportunities.
4. Offer taped sermons for those who are unable to make the weekly services. You could tape the sermon each week.
5. Prayer, Meditation and Personal Reflection. Do you provide a place for this? It could be a garden, chapel or a quiet room.
6. Church services to fit all the needs. Do you offer services for the different religions in your building? You could contact the church and ask for a volunteer, even if they only come monthly, would address the needs of those who are not attending church.
7. Add Bible reading, Bible Study and daily affirmations.
8. Are their Bibles on Tapes, Bibles in the rooms and other reading religious materials offered. There are many organizations that offer free religious materials.
9. Bereavement Services
10. Support Groups with your volunteer clergy to talk about spirituality. The support groups could talk about the positives of growing old, such as freedom to pursue hobbies, prayer, study. The support group could provide support for spiritual development.

The facility should post the names of the clergy, their church affiliation and their phone number. The clergy should be provided a list of all new admissions so the clergy can keep an up to date list of residents. It is important that the religious lists be kept current and updated.

It is important to nurture someone spiritual side which can be through gardening, activities, reflection and volunteering.

"God's gift of long life brings with it gains and losses, both of which can lead to the continued development of our spirituality."

ABOUT SANDRA

Sandra Stimson has experience as a corporate consultant, Corporate Trainer and National Speaker. Her experience is in long term care, as Activity Director, Director of Alzheimer's Units and Assistant Administrator of a 550 bed long term care county home. She is Co-founder of Pet Express Pet Therapy Club, is a Life Replay Specialist. Sandra implements dementia units nationwide. Sandra has written several books, Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care and Pet Express Pet Therapy Program. Sandra has been a facilitator for Alzheimer's support groups and is the Awards Chair for the NJ Association of Activity Professionals. Sandra is the Executive Director of **National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners**
<http://www.nccdp.org>.

[Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care](#) offers resources for health care professionals in many areas of dementia care, care plans, Snoezelen products, dementia activity calendars, adult day care calendars, sensory calendars, reminisce videos for dementia, activity books, and dates to remember, party supplies, resources and links.



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